

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 03755 271743Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 271720Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9161

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3755

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT, PGOV

SUBJ: CABINET CHANGES IMMINENT?

REF: SANTIAGO 3746

1. SUMMARY. IN CONJUNCTION WITH DESIGNATION OF GEN PINOCHET AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MIN INTERIOR GEN BONILLA ANNOUNCED CABINET MINISTERS AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS WILL PRESENT RESIGNATIONS "SOON" TO ALLOW PINOCHET FREE HAND IN REORGANIZING GOVT TEAM. THERE IS SPECULATION ABOUT INCLUDING MORE CIVILIANS IN A REORGANIZED CABINET. END SUMMARY.

2. GEN AUGUSTO PINOCHET WILL BE FORMALLY SWORN IN AS "SUPREME CHIEF OF THE NATION" AFTERNOON JUNE 27.

3. IN THIS CONNECTION, MIN INTERIOR GEN OSCAR BONILLA TOLD REPORTERS JUNE 26 THAT CABINET, UNDER SECRETARIES, PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS (INTENDENTES AND GOBERNADORES), MAYORS, AND "OFFICIALS ENJOYING THE PERSONAL CONFIDENCE OF THE CHIEF OF STATE" WILL PRESENT THEIR FORMAL RESIGNATIONS AFTER PINOCHET SWEARING-IN CEREMONY. EL MERCURIO, QUOTING "OFFICIAL SOURCES," CLAIMED RESIGNATIONS WILL BE PRESENTED NEXT WEEK. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON COLLECTIVE CABINET RESIGNATION, JUNTA SPOKESMAN WILLOUGHBY STATED: "I AM UNABLE TO DENY THAT REPORT."

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 03755 271743Z

4. COMMENT. NATIONAL PARTY POLITICIANS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH

TOP LEVELS OF GOC HAVE BEEN TELLING US THAT CABINET CHANGES ARE LIKELY AND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PRESSING PINOCHET TO REPLACE SOME MILITARY MINISTERS WITH CIVILIANS. MOST WIDELY RUMORED SCENARIO HAS IT THAT ONE MINISTER FROM EACH OF FOUR UNIFORMED SERVICES WILL BE DROPPED, THUS MAKING WAY FOR CIVILIANS AND STILL MAINTAINING PRESENT PARITY AMONG SERVICES IN TOP LEVEL APPOINTMENTS. PRESUMED GOAL OF CHANGES WOULD BE GREATER EFFICIENCY AND COMPETENCE IN CABINET POSTS WHERE THEY CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT AT PRESENT (E.G. AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION). IN THIS CONNECTION, IT IS PERHAPS WORTH NOTING THAT PROMINENT FORMER DEPUTY PATRICIO MEKIS (NATIONAL PARTY) WAS RECENTLY APPOINTED TO REPLACE MILITARY OFFICER AS MAYOR OF RANCAGUA.
POPPER

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